

PERS 76-065

DD/A Registry

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14 JAN 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Administration

SUBJECT : Comments on Memo to the DCI by the EEO
Advisory Panel, dtd 17 Dec 75

1. The Office of Personnel is in general agreement with the thrust of the EEO Advisory Panel's comments concerning the Professional Aptitude Test Battery (PATB). We also agree in principle with paragraph 4 of their memo regarding substantive comments on the routing sheets of circulating applicant files.

2. The present method of PATB testing, Part I, and the initial use to which it is put by decision-makers has been of concern to us for some time. As you know, Part I is scheduled in the field by the recruiter and given to applicants [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The results are forwarded to Headquarters where they are processed and made available to Agency decision-makers upon request. This is, in fact, a time-consuming activity. It is becoming increasingly difficult for recruiters to schedule tests. Test centers seem to close up on short notice. Sometimes the test administrators do not appear and a few administrators do not mail the tests immediately after the testing. It is also difficult for many applicants to get to a testing center. Once the test has been taken, several weeks go by before it is available in finished form to a decision-maker. It is not at all unusual for two months to elapse from recruiter interview to Part I availability. Distance, money, inconvenience and time away from a job are all factors which argue against the present system of field administration of PATB, Part I.

3. In view of the above problems, it is recommended that the PATB be administered during the first visit of the applicant to Headquarters. This occurs either after an office has reviewed

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the applicant's folder with interest and invites the applicant in for a pre-processing interview or after the applicant has been placed in process and comes to Washington for pre-employment processing. Part II of PATB is already administered during the first of these visits; we would propose giving Part I at the same time. This will require an additional half day in Washington, but we believe the additional cost would more than equal savings resulting from the cancellation of [] field testing.

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4. The more fundamental issue raised by the Panel is the proper time to use the PATB results. We believe there is sufficient information in an applicant's file regarding level and quality of academic training, relevance of work experience and assessment of suitability by the recruiter for a component to make an initial judgment as to whether that applicant should be rejected, invited for an interview or placed in process, without Part I results in hand at the time. If administered later, Part I would be used in the same manner as Part II is often used now, i.e., to confirm the component's judgment that the applicant is well qualified to fill a particular position and has solid potential for career development. OER is using Part I in this way and appears satisfied with it.

5. We would urge that an applicant with a good file and a good recruiter interview report who has had a favorable personal interview with representatives of an operating component be put in process before the PATB results are available. A few undoubtedly would be canceled out if those results are unfavorable. We are convinced, however, that most would remain and that the total selection/processing cycle can be cut by seven or eight weeks. The savings in time plus the monetary savings which will accrue by not giving Part I to hundreds of applicants who will never be put in process or on whom a readout will never be requested will more than offset the cost of those "in process" applicants canceled out because of poor test results.

6. As noted above, we agree in principle with the Advisory Panel that the substantive opinion of one component, as expressed on a routing sheet, could influence the judgment of other components even though their needs and qualifications may be most dissimilar. This type of influence is substantially less for black minority applicants than for others. Copies of a black

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applicant file are sent directly from the Office of Personnel to each Directorate of possible interest and returned in the same manner. This procedure reduces the number of components that see "the" file and any comments that are attached along the way.

7. The Panel's solution, however, would substantially increase our workload; it could not be accomplished in a timely manner without additional clerical help. If files were to stack-up waiting for removal of routing sheets, the time consumed in the applicant selection process would lengthen unacceptably. The "real" influence of routing sheet comments on strong applicant files is probably minimal. The Office of Personnel has fixed and limited personnel resources. On balance, "purifying" the system would not seem to be of such priority as to warrant reducing our effort elsewhere through resource reallocation.

(Signed) F. W. M. Janney

F. W. M. Janney
Director of Personnel

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